



SERMON NOTES: NEHEMIAH (#7)

Title: Deceptive Distractions (Nehemiah: week 7)

Text: Nehemiah 6:1-19

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Intro: After handling an internal struggle in the last chapter, our main man Nehemiah must once again battle against an external enemy bent on his destruction. This time though, their tactics have changed. Instead of obvious and outright opposition, they resort to deception and try to trick Nehemiah into diverting his attention. As we study Nehemiah 6, there is much to learn from Nehemiah's wisdom and how he handled the deceptive distractions to his mission.

I. NEHEMIAH SAID NO TO DIVERSION.

Sanballat and his crew could not distract Nehemiah from his mission with the threat of physical violence in chapter 4, so this time they change their tactics. Instead, they try and trick him into a "discussion" when in reality they didn't want to talk at all. Nehemiah sees through their ploy and refuses to come down off the wall. Nehemiah 6:3 is one of the great sentences in the entire book where Nehemiah says, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down."

Application:

1. Many things that draw us away from God and our focus on him are morally neutral. Yet, when we add those things up and give our heart to them, they end up leading us to places we never thought we'd go.
2. Have you considered what those neutral but diverting and distracting things are that threaten to pull you down off the wall?

II. NEHEMIAH SAID NO TO DISGRACE AND DEFAMING OF HIS CHARACTER.

After the failed diversion of trying to get Nehemiah off the wall through discussion, his enemies resort to defaming his character and leveling false charges against him. Their allegations were completely false, and Nehemiah had the wisdom and the strength to call them on their lie.

Application:

1. Our enemy Satan will often try to bring past failures and descriptions of us back to mind so as to discredit and discourage us.
2. In order to refute the lies we face that often in our minds, we need to have a firm understanding of the Gospel and what Jesus has done with our sin (removed all of it forever) and what he has given us in its place (his righteousness). 2 Corinthians 5:21
3. It is very easy to forget your identity in Christ when the mind games of doubt and discouragement come. That is why consistent Bible, prayer, and Christian community are so vital.

III. NEHEMIAH SAID NO TO DECEPTIVE ENTRAPMENT.

After not being able to coax him off the wall and then seeing their false accusations fall to the ground, Nehemiah's enemy tries one more time to divert him from his mission. This time they hire out two of his people to try and lure him into the temple. This would have been punishable by death for a non-priest like Nehemiah or at the least an admission by Nehemiah that he needed asylum and was not fit to lead. Either way, to enter the temple would have ruined Nehemiah's leadership (or cost him his life) and shipwrecked the mission. Again, Nehemiah is given heavenly wisdom and says no to this scheme.

Application:

1. Satan often comes as an angel of light, not as a red-horned pitchfork carrier (2 Corinthians 11:14).
2. Even those close to us may deceive us.
3. We must be sober minded and vigilant, because our enemy doesn't just want to harass us, he wants to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8-10).

TWO QUESTIONS:

1. Why is this Important?

- The mission is at stake!
- Ephesians 2:8-10

2. How do we say no?

- 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Titus 2:11-14